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# Desertions

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In the back row someone is holding  
a garbage can cover behind a woman's

head. We are making progress. See?  
Most of us are showing you

the insides of our hands.

*Robert L. McRoberts*

## DESERTIONS

I have deserted the causes  
of my dreams.  
The men I adore have perished.  
The women  
open their blouses and air  
falls out, plump and empty.

I have deserted the music  
of my friends;  
dark notes, fantasies.  
I have taken my destiny  
out of their soft hands.

All my country, its vast lakes  
of despair, its mountains,  
equal to a single pebble  
in my shoe, a dampness beneath  
the sun's perception.

A man passes me on the street.  
His face is like my father's;  
strong and old:  
A sycamore by a white stream—

And I desert him; even as I pass  
I am deserting him, leaf by leaf,  
each light branch, vanishing.